
“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

the tempter,” and “the members of the OA strive to give the holy Angels as much space as possible in their lives and their apostolate, so that the blessed spirits can work through the individual and with him for the glory of God and salvation of the world.” (art. 16).

Article 17 explains the purpose of the Consecration to the Guardian Angel in these words: “The purpose ... is to bind oneself to one’s own holy Guardian Angel, so that his help can become much more efficacious in us and we advance more rapidly on the way to God. The holy Angel wishes to employ his whole strength that we never separate ourselves from God. He wants to speak to us more clearly through inner admonitions, motivate us more to do good (cf. CCC 350), alert us to dangers, illumine our mind, so that we may penetrate more deeply into the knowledge of GOD, the fear of the Lord and the love of God, as well as into the greatness and significance of the word of God.

“Through the Consecration to the Guardian Angel we become more disposed to all Guardian Angel services on earth, especially to the spiritual and corporal works of mercy (cf. CCC 2447). Eyes and ears, heart and hands become more open not only toward s the holy Angels but also towards our fellow men.”

4. Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

May the example of St. Joseph animate our priestly life. Such a holy collaboration with the angels is certainly God’s and the Church’s intention in establishing the *Work of the Holy Angels*. In future letters I hope to help you become more familiar with the *Work of the Holy Angels* which exists “for the strengthening of the Holy Church, for the support of the priestly state and consecrated souls” (ibid., art. 3). Additionally, I sincerely hope to see you at the retreat in November and explain this in greater depth.

Fr. Titus Kieninger ORC

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ASSOCIATION OF PRIESTS IN THE WORK OF THE HOLY ANGELS®

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CHRIST’S PRIESTS UNITED WITH THE HOLY ANGELS IN THE CHURCH

“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”



Association of Priests In Opus Angelorum®

St. Joseph “being warned in a dream” (Mt 2:20,22)

Vol. XVIII, June 2012

Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

The Word of God in Sacred Scripture is one particular way in which God is close to us. When we read it carefully and in peace we may be surprised by God’s attentiveness and openness towards us. In His fatherly way He manifests Himself and His love and work to us. Such silent listening should become habitual; indeed, it should be a daily habit. For it is God’s wish to guide us – normally through the angels – even in our daily affairs.

The life of St. Joseph, which we know from the holy Gospel of St. Matthew, narates several different interventions by the angel in his life and mission. They are not always extraordinary and are, for this very reason of greater interest to us, since ‘daily affairs’ evidently abound much more.

1. St. Joseph, “a just man” (Mt 1:19)

a) Angelic guidance constant, normal and natural

After St. Joseph “rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt,” he “remained there until the death of Herod” (Mt 2:14-15). Then, “when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, ‘*Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.*’” (Mt 2:19-20). Again we witness St. Joseph’s simplicity and exemplary obedience: “And he *rose* and *took* the child and his mother, and *went* to the land of Israel.” (Mt 2:21) However, having arrived back in his home country, he showed fatherly responsibility: “When he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and” – here again – “being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee” (Mt 2:22). St. Joseph assumed his duty. He had his goal, followed reason, searched for information and evaluated what he heard. St. Joseph’s trepidation elicited once more the angelic help. In intervening, though, it sufficed for the angel to confirm what Joseph had already perceived. He did not take over or give a concrete command. He merely “warned” him, so that man may reason anew and decide according to his own capacity.

Notice here how the Divine Artist, the Holy Spirit did not state again that this warning came from an angel. For, as St. John of the Cross teaches, “All the works, therefore, which are done by the angels, and all their inspirations, are said in the Scriptures, with truth and propriety, to be the work of God and of themselves; for ordi-

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narily these inspirations come through the angels. (*Dark Night*, II, ch.12,3). Our point, though, is that the divine (angelic) interventions do not intend to overwhelm and deprive us of our freedom, but rather enlighten us in order to facilitate our freedom and moral responsibility. And for this reason, the prudence of decisions must be regulated by right reason, docile to faith. This means that our actions must conform to discernible moral criteria. And in those cases, where an inspiration goes beyond the reach of direct, prudent discernment, one must discern and verify that the light actually comes from an angel. In the first case one practices the virtue of prudence, and in the latter both prudence and docility to the Gift of Counsel. Let us endeavor therefore to try to be like Joseph “a just man” with right intention of obedience to God’s commandments. The Angels, who, in any case, are sent by God, will guide you constantly, indirectly or directly, in ways that always respect our moral responsibility and freedom.

b) St. Joseph and we priests

St. Joseph acquitted himself well in those trials with the help of the holy Angel. After that, he shows himself an exemplary father-figure. He is dedicated, cares for and watches out for his wife, the Virgin Mary, and her Divine Son. In this responsibility he found help and support with the angel of the Lord. He comports himself decorously out of respect for their persons and their common virginal state. At the same time he is also close to them in his love, care and solicitude, attentive to all their needs.

The parallel to us priests is evident. Through our priestly ordination we participate in Christ’s spousal solicitude for the Church, his spouse. This bond gives us the responsibility to care for her children, the faithful. Watching St. Joseph we learn and grow in our mission: Forgetting personal interests; maintaining a certain distance through our consecration to Christ and our celibate state; and yet absorbed by the care for the Church and her children.

We are attentive to the parish and the souls entrusted to us even as he was to Mary and Jesus: Silently open for them, listening inwardly to their holy angels, and this even while thinking, while talking, while working, that is: being circumspectively attentive even in the midst of our pastoral duties. Obeying and fulfilling God’s will and yet, always “watching out” and remaining open for another call.

2. The constant state of our ministry “always and everywhere”

This is the way the angel guided St. Joseph in his responsibility for the Holy Family. This is the way in which the angel of the Lord can and will always live with us and lead us priests.

We are surrounded by many holy angels “always and everywhere”. They never abandon man. This is with a basic characteristic of the ministers of God for they are called to be “bridge-builders” between eternity and temporality, heaven and earth, and so establish communion between man and God. Exercising our personal freedom in conscious collaboration with His grace, coming to us through the angels, brings us interior peace. Perceiving this peace we can verify the angel’s guidance, and so are flexible to correspond with it.

“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

With an increasing awareness of the presence of the angels like St. Joseph, we call upon our Guardian Angel when we leave the Rectory or our Religious House, we call upon the Guardian Angels of the others before we enter the Confessional, begin our homily, or meet with someone. We ask their light to discern what we should do next, or to find something we are looking for. We invite them as we prepare our meditation, our homily, for the celebration of Holy Mass and the recitation of the Divine Office... We send our Guardian Angel to persons we want to meet and call upon their Guardian Angel too, perhaps, to move them to call us. We entrust to the holy Angels duties we cannot fulfill, or persons we cannot reach. We ask them to influence those who are far from us or “cold” towards God... When we call upon them naturally and frequently, they become a part of our daily life. They live and walk and think with us and we with them. “The Church venerates the angels who ... protect every human being” (CC 352). That is what we see by way of the life of St. Joseph: We should take to heart and live in the awareness of the angels who work with us in every good thing we do (cf. St. Thomas Aq., STh I, 114, 3, ad 3; in: CCC 350).

3. Confraternity of Priests of the Holy Cross in the Opus Angelorum

These last two reflections on the angels in the life of St. Joseph illustrate how the presence of the angels is a normal and constant fact of life. We have to ask: How can our contact with the holy angels become more normal and habitual?

a) Consecration and communication

We found St. Joseph to be an interior man, silent, humble, free of great personal ambitions. His interiority disposed him to be attentive towards the interior communications of the angel. Any interior perception of a truly angelic “indication” draws us more towards such recollected behavior. Therefore, we can say: this state of possible communication between the angel and us matures through time and experience. One way to cultivate such an attitude is by a personal, reciprocal agreement which is known as an “act of consecration”. There have been many approved consecrations to the Angels in the history of the Church.

On November 7th, 2008, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life ... approved the *Work of the Holy Angels* as “a public association of the Catholic Church with a juridic personality in accordance with can. 313”, and “its Statutes are approved by the Holy See in accordance with can. 324” (*Statutes of the Opus Sancto-rum Angelorum*, art. 6). In these Statutes is explained: “Through union with Christ effected by Baptism and Confirmation, we are also united with Mary, the Angels and Saints (cf. Col 1:12.20),” and “The communion with Christ and His angels ... is deepened by the Consecration to the holy Angels common to all members” (art. 16).

b) Consecration and Consolidation

The Church explains in these statutes a greater openness towards the angel: “Each member should give heed to his holy Guardian Angel, listen to him (cf. Ex 23:20-21) and learn to distinguish his voice and his admonitions from the insinuations of